

## Infection with Nonpathogenic Intestinal Amebae

### What are nonpathogenic Intestinal Amebae?

Some parasites that are commonly found in peoples' intestines and stool specimens never make them sick. Germs that don't cause illness are called "nonpathogenic." These parasites do not harm the body, even in people with weak immune systems.

The following is a list of these parasites (amebae):

- *Chilomastix mesnili* (KYE-low-MASS-ticks mez-KNEE-lye)
- *Endolimax nana* (En-doe-LYE-max NAH-na)
- *Entamoeba coli* (ENT-a-ME-ba KO-lye)
- *Entamoeba dispar* (ENT-a-ME-ba DIS-par)
- *Entamoeba hartmanni* (ENT-a-ME-ba hart-MAHN-ee)
- *Iodamoeba buetschlii* (eye-ODE-a-ME-ba bush-lee-eye)

### Where do these parasites live in the body?

They are found only in the intestines, never in other parts of the body.

### Can these parasites cause symptoms?

No.

### What should I do if I think I might be infected with one or more of these parasites?

See your health care provider.

### How is infection diagnosed?

By seeing the parasites in samples of your stool.

### I was told I am infected with one or more of these parasites. How did I become infected?

You might have become infected by swallowing something, such as food or water, or touching something (and then putting your fingers in your mouth) that was contaminated with stool from an infected person.

### I have not been feeling well. Could these parasites be causing my symptoms?

No. You and your health care provider should look for other causes of your symptoms. At the same time you became infected with these harmless parasites (for example, through contaminated food or water), you might have become infected with germs that can cause intestinal illness. Your health care provider might want to check your stool for bacteria, viruses, and other parasites. Another possibility is that your symptoms are not caused by an infection.

### How long could these parasites stay in my body?

For weeks, months, or years. But they never spread from the intestines to other parts of the body.

### To be on the safe side should I be treated to get these parasites out of my body?

No. These parasites are harmless.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. If you have any questions about the disease described above or think that you may have a parasitic infection, consult a health care provider.

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